Administrative Functions Review

June, 1997

Dye Management Group, Inc.
Utah Department of Transportation
Administrative Functions Review
Table of Contents

Executive Summary
I. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
   A. Study Purpose ............................................................................................. 1
   B. Review Scope ............................................................................................. 1
   C. Objectives ................................................................................................... 1
II. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Context ......................... 3
   A. Cultural Change .......................................................................................... 3
   B. Management Structure ............................................................................... 5
   C. Opportunities for Advancement for Administrative Support Staff ........... 7
III. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Structure and Functions ....9
   A. Findings .................................................................................................... 10
   B. Issues ........................................................................................................ 11
   C. Recommendations .................................................................................... 12
Appendix A (Example of Evaluation Sheet for Managers - Evaluation by Staff) A-1

Appendix B (Detailed Findings and Recommendations by Function) ..........B-1

A. Accounts Payable ................................................................................... B-2
B. Accounts Receivable .............................................................................. B-5
C. Payroll ..................................................................................................... B-6
D. Budget Development and Monitoring ................................................... B-8
E. Travel Arrangements/Reimbursements .................................................. B-9
F. Secretarial/Receptionist ........................................................................ B-11
G. Purchasing ............................................................................................ B-14
H. Personnel Activities .............................................................................. B-15
I. Policies/Rules/Procedures/Documents ...................................................... B-17
I. Introduction

A. Study Purpose:
   - Review existing allocation of administrative support staff in the Rampton Complex.
   - Evaluate current allocation of staff to support administrative functions.
   - Identify opportunities for improvement.
   - Provide specific recommendations for improvement.

B. Review Scope:
   - Three week time frame.
   - Focus on managerial, policy issues.
   - Limited quantitative analysis.
   - Substantial amount of information from interviews.

C. Objectives:
   - Provide for good accessibility and responsiveness of secretarial, budgeting, and accounting services for all divisions, offices within the Rampton Complex.
   - Ensure reliable, professional, and timely accounting, budgeting, and secretarial support.
• Maximize productivity and efficiency of accounting, budgeting, and secretarial services staff.

II. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Context

Our assessment indicates that recommendations for the allocation of administrative support staff and resources cannot be successful in achieving the objectives outlined above if they are not firmly grounded in the organizational context. This includes the cultural change through which the Department is going, management issues, and advancement opportunities for administrative support staff. The following outlines the most critical organizational factors impacting the ability of administrative support staff to carry out their job in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

A. Findings

• At this point in time, some managers at the Rampton Complex are still struggling to implement performance-based management, stay within their budgets, and implement leadership skills learned during workshops and seminars. This is a difficult but necessary change for managers.

• Some operational managers in the Operations Group felt that there was a lack of service orientation on the part of some administrative support staff. This may be in part a function of low staffing levels.

• Our analysis indicates that there are too many lower level administrative managers in some administrative support services units. This is the case in the Project Development Group where the support services unit has four managers (one acting) who currently supervise four FTEs. In the Comptroller’s Office, an Accountant supervises 2.5 FTEs carrying out accounts payable activities for some administrative units and sections, and one supervisor supervises two secretarial and one half time accounting support persons. This appears to be a result of UDOT’s structure which currently does not provide for a skill-based career path for accounting/fiscal or secretarial staff.

• There currently is no skill-based career path for non-managerial administrative support staff.
B. Issues

• Administrative support staff in the Project Development and Operations Groups expressed the feeling that the cultural changes requested by senior management are not implemented as intended. Their perception is everything is just “business as usual”, nothing will change. Unless there is tangible evidence that all staff in the Rampton Complex, including their own managers, will be held accountable and that those who show that they are taking responsibility are rewarded, change will be stymied.

• The level of consolidation for administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex must balance the need for efficiencies of operation with the need for a good level of service for all administrative functions.

• The lack of other advancement opportunities forces administrative support staff who are not always qualified to apply for management positions in order to get a pay raise.

• Based on their assessment of the situation, some administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex feel that their leaders do not appreciate the contribution of non-technical employees to the organization.

• More than half of administrative support staff interviewed expressed some anger and cynicism about what they perceived as a lack of recognition of their work and indicated that it is generating a low level of morale. This in turn negatively impacts productivity.

C. Recommendations

• Hold managers accountable to developing and meeting the performance standards for their group, division, or office.

• Include an evaluation by employees in the performance review of all managers.

• Develop career paths for administrative support staff that allow for pay increases without moving into a management position.
III. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Structure and Functions

The following provides a summary of findings and recommendations regarding the organizational structure and administrative functions at the Rampton Complex. It highlights issues related to the different work groups located at the Complex.

A. Findings

- The issues related to management and accountability have a significant impact on the ability of administrative support staff to fulfill their functions.

- The existing support services units are functional.

- There are opportunities for improved efficiencies in all three support services units.

- There are opportunities for simplifying accounting processes that can reduce staffing needs over time.

- There are opportunities for greater consolidation of support services in the Rampton Complex.

- Operational managers want to maintain control over their budgeting functions.

- There are concerns regarding the availability and level of service provided by secretarial staff.

- It is difficult for many secretarial staff to provide good service.

B. Issues

- Issues of management and organizational culture have a significant effect on the success of functional and operational changes. At this point in time, they may be more important than organizational changes.

- Changes in procedures and processes can likely provide significant improvements in the efficiency of accounting functions in all three support service groups. Again, at this point in time, these changes may be more important than organizational changes.
• The divisions comprising the Administrative Services Group and Community Relations could benefit from a consolidation of both accounting and secretarial support services.

• The concerns regarding the ability of secretarial staff to provide good service must be addressed.

C. Recommendations

Consolidation at the group level:

• At this point in time, consolidate both accounting and secretarial staff at the group level:
  
  − Consolidate accounting and secretarial support functions for the Project Development Group.
  
  − Maintain the Program Development support services unit as is.
  
  − Consolidate existing accounting and secretarial support services units (Traffic Safety, Motor Carriers, and Port of Entry; and Maintenance) in the Operations group.
  
  − Implement a new support services unit for the Administrative Services group, the Comptroller’s Office, Community Relations, and Internal Audit.

• This new structure would provide a balance between efficiency requirements and the need to address the cultural and organizational issues outlined in Section II at this point in time.

• Use an organizational structure similar to the way the Program Development support unit or the support units in the regions are functioning now for these support services units.

• Carry out in-depth analysis of accounting procedures and secretarial responsibilities to determine and implement further opportunities for efficiency improvements:
  
  − Review and minimize the use of ARCM in contract management.
  
  − Review, simplify and standardize the consultant prequalification process.
− Review, simplify and standardize right-of-way project filing procedures.

− Review and streamline the accounts payable processes used by accounting support staff.

**Considerations regarding full consolidation:**

- At this point, we do not recommend that UDOT consolidate all accounting and financial functions within one accounting services unit at the Rampton Complex. We believe that the risk of service disruption could be significant and costly if UDOT attempted to consolidate all administrative support functions, address managerial, cultural, and personnel issues, and make major adjustments to existing processes at the same time.

- We believe that UDOT should work to improve processes and procedures and address its managerial, cultural, and personnel issues before any major changes in organizational structure are made.

- Once efficiency improvements resulting from these efforts can be quantified, it may be more cost-effective for the Department to move to a fully consolidated administrative function.

- We suggest, however, that even a fully consolidated accounting function remain separate from the Comptroller’s Office, potentially as part of the Administrative Services group, to ensure a clear separation between processing and oversight functions for all accounting and budgeting activities. Table 1 in Section III of the report outlines our assessment of the two options for consolidation.
I. Introduction

A. Study Purpose

The purpose of this review was to:

- Review existing allocation of administrative support staff in the Rampton Complex.
- Evaluate current allocation of staff to support administrative functions.
- Identify opportunities for improvement.
- Provide specific recommendations for improvement.

B. Review Scope

The scope of the project involved:

- A three week time frame.
- Focus on managerial, policy issues.
- Limited quantitative analysis.
- Substantial amount of information from interviews (75 interviews with administrative, professional, and managerial staff).

C. Objectives

Project objectives were to:

- Provide for good accessibility and responsiveness of secretarial, budgeting, and accounting services for all divisions, offices within the Rampton Complex.
- Ensure reliable, professional, and timely accounting, budgeting, and secretarial support.
• Maximize productivity and efficiency of accounting, budgeting, and secretarial services staff.
II. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Context

At the outset of this project, the scope for the administrative functions review for the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) was focused on an evaluation of the processes, organizational structure, and number of staff. However, our assessment indicates that recommendations for the allocation of administrative support staff and resources cannot be successful in achieving the objectives outlined above if they are not firmly grounded in the organizational context. This includes the cultural change through which the Department is going, management issues, and advancement opportunities for administrative support staff. The following outlines the most critical organizational factors impacting the ability of administrative support staff to carry out their job in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

A. Cultural Change

1. Increased Accountability and Responsibility

During the last years, UDOT has embarked in an effort to change its culture towards increased accountability and responsibility. Managers are asked to develop realistic budgets and to stay within their limits. At the request of senior management, efforts to develop and implement performance planning approaches are under way throughout the Department. There is an ongoing effort to implement quality improvements, streamline and simplify processes, and eliminate unnecessary rules and regulations. Interviewees throughout the Complex expressed appreciation for these efforts. They felt the current leadership of the Department was moving the organization in the right direction. However, the implementation of these efforts is causing concerns:

a. Findings

- Interviewees expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction and cynicism about lower levels of management.

- This is because they feel that some managers are “merely paying lip service” to the new culture and value system.
b. Issues

- Administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex think that everything is just “business as usual”, nothing will change. Unless there is tangible evidence that all staff, including lower level managers, will be held accountable and those who show that they are taking responsibility are rewarded, change will be stymied.

2. Service Orientation

Some operational managers felt that there was a lack of service orientation on the part of some administrative support staff. This appears to be more of an issue in areas where administrative functions are not consolidated at the group level. On the other hand, managers felt strongly that easy access to administrative support staff, and in particular staff with budget development and monitoring capabilities, is important.

a. Findings

- A consolidation of accounting and financial functions above the group level may lead to a situation where the administrative support staff is perceived as being responsible not to the group leader or division managers but to a central accounting manager. At this time, this sentiment among division managers may hamper the desired development of a culture of responsibility and accountability within the Department.

- Consolidation at the group level has supported a satisfactory customer orientation in the Program and Project Development groups.

b. Issues

- Operational managers do not always receive the quality of service required from administrative support staff.

- The level of consolidation for administrative support staff must balance the need for economies of scale and the need for a good level of service and accountability for all administrative functions.
3. **Recommendation:** Hold managers accountable for developing and implementing the performance planning for their group, division, or office.

Currently, most divisions, offices, and groups in the Complex are behind schedule with regard to the development/implementation of performance measures, standards, and planning approaches. Ensure that planning approaches, measures, and standards are completed and used for monitoring.

a. **Benefits**

- Making their implementation an evaluation criterion for managers will send a clear message to all staff.

- Over time, as more data tracking the performance measures becomes available, UDOT will be able to evaluate the efficiency of its administrative functions. This will allow the Department to make adjustments to staffing levels as staff becomes more productive.

b. **Risks**

- This approach will be successful only if it is consistently applied. Managers and staff must equally be held to performance planning and to meeting the agreed upon performance measures.

**B. Management Structure**

1. **Operational Managers**

a. **Findings**

- Interviewees expressed concern that the current leadership training efforts for managers, and in particular mid level operational managers, are not translated into action to the extent that may be desirable.

- Operational managers at the Complex appear to not always take the responsibility for ensuring accuracy in their budgeting and
accounting functions seriously enough and remove themselves from oversight. This causes a problem when the immediate supervisors of the accounting staff do not have the experience to ensure accuracy.

b. Issues

- At this time, consolidation of these functions above the group level would make it even easier for these managers to avoid their responsibilities in providing adequate oversight. This is likely to counteract current efforts of the top leadership of the Department to increase the sense of accountability and responsibility on the part of operational managers.

- Operational managers may leave resolution of administrative support staff issues entirely to their administrative managers.

2. Administrative Managers

a. Findings

- Our analysis indicated that there are too many administrative staff managers at lower levels. This appears to be in particular true in the Project Development support services unit and to some extent in the Comptroller’s Office. This finding was supported by interviewees. (“Too many chiefs and not enough Indians.”)

- This appears to be a result of UDOT’s structure which currently does not provide for a career path for accounting/fiscal or secretarial staff that does not focus on management but on professional expertise.

b. Issues

- The lack of other advancement opportunities forces staff to apply for management positions in order to get a pay raise.

- Interviewees throughout the Complex felt that staff moved into these positions are not always qualified but are considered as deserving a raise. They also perceived a lack of training and support
that would help these lower level managers to obtain both the managerial and technical skills required to provide quality service.

3. **Recommendation: Include a performance review by employees in the evaluation of all managers.**

This can be achieved through a questionnaire. (See Appendix A for an example.) The information gained from an employee evaluation should be shared with the manager without providing the source of the comments.

a. **Benefits**

- The approach can provide information on the success of all managers in managing their staff and addressing any personnel or other issues that may arise in the Complex.

b. **Risks**

- If anonymity is not guaranteed, administrative support staff may not be willing to be open about concerns with regard to their managers.

C. **Opportunities for Advancement for Administrative Support Staff**

1. **Findings**

- In the course of our interviews, administrative support staff consistently expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that no career path exists for non-managerial employees.

- Administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex feel that the current structure of jobs and advancement opportunities available leads into management positions by default.

- At a relatively low level of salary and experience, advancement for administrative support staff is only possible by moving into a management position. This has led to a situation where supervisors manage 1-3 persons and added a management layer that appears
unnecessary from a functional point of view. It also forces these lower level working managers to supervise in order to justify their position.

- About 25 percent of administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex feel that this causes a fragmentation of duties and prevents staff from advancing and growing as managers are reluctant to expand the knowledge of their staff in fear of making their own supervisory position unnecessary. They stated that it also leads staff to “jockey” for positions and makes them less inclined to assist other staff during busy periods or provide for effective cross training.

### 2. Issues

- Based on their assessment of the situation, some administrative support staff at the Rampton Complex feel that their supervisors do not appreciate the contribution of non-technical, and as some staff pointed out, mostly female, employees to the organization.

- Over 50 percent of administrative support staff interviewees expressed some anger and cynicism about what they perceived as a lack of recognition of their work and indicated that it is generating a low level of morale. This in turn negatively impacts productivity.

- Our interviews indicate that these sentiments are widespread throughout the Complex and not limited to individual employees or support service units.

### 3. Recommendation: Develop career paths for administrative support staff that allow for pay increases without moving into a management position.

The State of Utah has recently simplified the job classification system for many administrative positions, allowing UDOT to revise its own classification system. The Department should take advantage of this opportunity and develop career paths that do not include managerial duties as early as is currently the case.

#### a. Benefits

- This change in the classification system would provide opportunities for UDOT’s managers to advance administrative
support staff and show that they are an important part of its work force. This has the potential to improve morale and thus productivity.

- Better advancement opportunities may help UDOT to attract staff whose skills more closely match the Department’s needs.

- Administrative support staff will have opportunities that are better matched with those of operational staff.

- The Department and its managers at the Rampton Complex can provide for opportunities of staff to grow in their field of expertise and interest. Staff do not need to change jobs anymore just to get a raise that gives them a salary commensurate with their skills and efforts.

- Increasing levels of expertise will reduce and eventually eliminate the need for lower level management positions as staff become increasingly proficient.

b. Risks

- Despite recent changes, state guidelines limit UDOT’s ability to change the payment structure. It will be important to take full advantage of changes that can be made.

- Without clear communication about the objectives for this change, staff may consider this as an attempt to even further reduce opportunities for advancement.

- This will be particularly difficult to accept for existing lower level administrative managers.

III. Findings and Recommendations: Organizational Structure and Functions

The original scope of this study is focused in this area. The analysis of organizational structure is therefore more detailed than the evaluation of leadership and cultural issues. In addition, Appendix B provides detailed evaluation by administrative function.
A. Findings

- The issues related to management and accountability outlined above have a significant impact on the ability of administrative support staff to fulfill their functions. Any changes to the structure of administrative functions in the Rampton Complex that do not address these issues have a smaller chance of success than those that do.

- There are opportunities for efficiency improvements in all administrative functions that were evaluated. They include:
  - A restructured accounts payable process that minimizes the number of reviews, verifications, and audits.
  - Making all payments through FI-NET.
  - Simplifying the accounts receivable process.
  - Allowing staff to submit time sheets electronically.
  - Increased involvement of managers to ensure that travel reimbursement and budgeting activities are appropriate.

- However, the limitations on data make it difficult to quantify these potential improvements at this point.

- The existing organization of the Program Development and Project Development support services units appears to provide the services required. The experience with these groups indicates that they can assist operational managers satisfactorily, despite the fact that they are working for multiple divisions and may be physically removed from their customers. Existing problems appear to be related to management and personnel issues.

- Operational managers have concerns regarding the availability and level of service provided by secretarial staff in all areas other than Program Development.

- In the Administrative Services divisions and Community Relations, where accounting functions have not been consolidated, accounting functions are generally not well defined and staff appear to be lacking training and expertise. Internal Audit has a single administrative staff person and is a small office.
• An assessment of the administrative support staff in the Aeronautics Division is not worthwhile at this time due to the pending consolidation of state air service functions.

B. Issues

• Issues of management and organizational culture have a significant effect on the success of functional and operational changes.

• Changes in procedures and processes can likely provide significant improvements in the efficiency of accounting functions.

• The divisions comprising the Administrative Services Group, Internal Audit, and Community Relations could benefit from a consolidation of both accounting and secretarial support services.

• It is difficult for many secretarial staff to provide good service. This is because secretarial staff are scattered individually throughout the building, making back up difficult. Secretarial staff also find it difficult to deal with the fact that they receive work requests from divisions and sections within the same group or on the same floor who do not have any secretarial support.

• There appear to be three major causes of problems regarding accounting functions:
  
  − Some staff members may have just been the default for the job. These staff members generally lack the training and expertise to be truly effective. This is a cause of frustration for both the staff and their managers.

  − Accounting staff in the Project Development and Traffic Safety, Motor Carriers, and Ports of Entry administrative support units appear to have administrative managers who heavily control the work of their staff. This is in part a function of the job classification structure in the administrative area: Advancement is often only possible by moving into a working supervisor position. Supervisors must supervise to justify their salary. This tends to generate a layer of review that may not be needed.

  − Some accounting functions, for example Right-of-Way (ROW) and consultant contract payments and reconciliation, require a fair amount of area specific knowledge that may take time to acquire.
C. Recommendations

We believe that the Department would benefit from consolidating both accounting and secretarial staff at the group level, similar to the way the Program Development support unit or the support units in the regions are functioning now. The support services unit for the Administrative Services Group would also support Community Relations, the Comptroller’s Office, and Internal Audit. This new structure would provide a balance between efficiency requirements and the need to address the cultural and organizational issues outlined in Section II. It would also help ensure that accounting staff can maintain the skills and experience required in areas such as ROW or consultant payments where this is a concern. In addition, this approach would allow administrative support staff to provide for back up support for all clerical functions yet still remain directly responsible to individual groups.

At this point, we do not recommend that UDOT consolidate all accounting and financial functions within one accounting services unit. We believe that the risk of service disruption could be significant and costly if UDOT attempted to consolidate all accounting functions, address managerial, cultural, and personnel issues, and make major adjustments to existing processes at the same time. Rather, we believe that UDOT should work to improve processes and procedures and address its managerial, cultural, and personnel issues before evaluating opportunities for further consolidation in more detail.

Once efficiency improvements resulting from these efforts can be quantified, the Department may decide to move to a fully consolidated accounting function. At this point in time, our analysis suggest that a separation of different accounting activities with budgetary responsibilities remaining at the group level and all other accounting functions being consolidated in a single group would potentially lead to problems similar to those now occurring with secretarial staff: It would be difficult to ensure an appropriate work flow and ensure that support is provided on a continuous basis.

We would suggest, however, that even a fully consolidated accounting function that may become appropriate in the future remain separate from the Comptroller’s Office, potentially as part of the Administrative Services group, to ensure a clear separation between processing and oversight functions for all accounting and budgeting activities. Table 1, on the following pages, outlines our assessment of the two options for consolidation.

The following recommendations provide detail and rationale for consolidation at the group level. Potential benefits and risks are also discussed.
1. **Project Development Group:**

Consolidate accounting and secretarial staff for the project development work group into a single project development support services division.

Figure 1, following Table 1, illustrates the proposed structure.

Our approach suggests two levels of supervision. The Support Services Manager would be responsible for both accounting and secretarial staff. In the second tier, we would reduce the current number of managers to two:
### Table 1: Benefits and Risks of Different Consolidation Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Consolidation at the Group Level</th>
<th>Full Consolidation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Operational managers have control over administrative support staff, in particular budgeting functions. This helps to ensure that they feel responsible for the administrative support staff.</td>
<td>Since this is close to the status quo for some accounting functions, this may be perceived as indication that everything is the way it should be. (Short-term issue)</td>
<td>Accounting Services Group would be accountable to UDOT not individual groups, divisions, or offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Service Delivery</strong></td>
<td>Provides a balance between the need to achieve economies of scale and the ability to provide fast, reliable, and responsive service.</td>
<td>May require UDOT to maintain a larger number of accounting staff than under a fully consolidated accounting function in order to provide continuous service.</td>
<td>This would likely be the most economical way to provide accounting services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Structure:</strong></td>
<td>Provides opportunity for group, division, and office managers to tailor services towards their needs.</td>
<td>May focus administrative efforts too much on perceived needs of group served rather than the mission of UDOT.</td>
<td>Allows for consistency in the service for all operational managers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management Structure:</strong></td>
<td>Allows for close coordination with operational managers — lines of responsibility are very clear.</td>
<td>Probably initially retains more managers in the administrative services groups than would be needed in a single accounting group.</td>
<td>Allows UDOT to minimize the number of managers required for the accounting functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potentially allows for problems in four groups rather than one.</td>
<td>Potentially allows for problems in four groups rather than one.</td>
<td>Potentially allows for problems in four groups rather than one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May allow micro management of staff.</td>
<td>May allow micro management of staff.</td>
<td>May allow micro management of staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1: Benefits and Risks of Different Consolidation Options (Cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advancement Opportunities for Administrative support staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation at the Group Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller group sizes allow staff to acquire a broader skill set.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows staff to learn and understand the function of a specific group within UDOT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel Issues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides for some opportunity to adjust staffing through implementation of fourth group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would allow UDOT to retain the support services units that function well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency Gains</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows for staff to focus on efficiency improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would allow UDOT to realize efficiency gains and then make personnel adjustments once the impact of these changes can be better estimated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1

Utah Department of Transportation
Proposed Project Development Group Organization*

*Note: Numbers in brackets, (#), are estimates of current FTEs.
One for the accounting functions (that person should have a good accounting background) and one for the secretarial staff.

Note: We do not recommend separation of Consultant Services and ROW accounting and reconciliation functions from the support services unit. There are three reasons for this:

- There would be no back up during vacation or sick time, or on the “off” day when the employee participates in the trip reduction program. Maintaining the existing level of consolidation would provide for the ability to cross train other staff for back up purposes.

- There would be no direct administrative supervision for the staff.

- It is doubtful that Consultant Services and ROW each require exactly one FTE now, or in the future. Leaving staff in the Support Services Group would allow redistribution of work as needed without crossing division lines—this is currently of concern with regard to secretarial staff. (Our limited assessment indicates that there are significant opportunities for simplification of the consultant prequalification, consultant contract payables, and both reconciliation processes. At some point in the future, there may be opportunities for reducing the current number of FTEs.)

a. Benefits

- The service level of the existing support services unit can be maintained and improved upon.

- All divisions in the project development group will have access to secretarial staff.

- Lines of communication are simplified.

- There is a clear distribution of responsibilities between the two lower level managers.

- Once staff has become accustomed to the new structure and possibly new responsibilities, it is likely that there will be opportunities for freeing one or more FTEs on the accounting side. The degree to which secretarial staff can be further consolidated will depend on the revised responsibilities defined for this function.
b. **Risks**

- Currently, the accountant position does not provide for the supervisory responsibilities suggested. The approach requires this position to fulfill both managerial and oversight functions over all accounting activities.

- Not all divisions in this group currently have secretarial support. A consolidated secretarial support function may lead to exaggerated expectations with regard to service level.

2. **Program Development Group:**

   Maintain the current level of consolidation.

   Figure 2, on the following page, illustrates the existing structure.

   The Program Development support group appears to be functioning well and provide the support that is needed.

3. **Operations Group:**

   Consolidate accounting and secretarial staff for the operations group into a single operations support services group.

   Figure 3, following Figure 2, illustrates the proposed structure.

   Our recommendations would result in an operations support group that would be very similar in structure to that of Project Development Support Services (PDSS). The accounting positions left in Maintenance would be added to the already existing support group for Traffic and Safety and Motor Carriers. Secretarial staff supporting individual divisions would be pooled. Again, there would be a manager for the accounting function, a manager for the secretarial function, and one administrative manager.

   Aeronautics and the two accounting technicians located at the Central Shop would be excluded. Aeronautics might be reviewed once the pending consolidation of state air transportation functions is completed. Staff at the shop should remain because they fulfill a function that is directly related to the operation of this facility. (One staff person deals exclusively with equipment and, based on our limited analysis, provides fairly specialized services. The second person has only recently been moved to the shop from the Complex, the position deals exclusively with shop requisitions. We did
not have the opportunity to audit her work closely enough to make a firm recommendation. A cursory review, however, supports location in the shop.)

**Figure 2**
Utah Department of Transportation
Proposed Program Development Division Organization*

*Note: Numbers in brackets, (#), are estimates of current FTEs.
a. Benefits

- Lack of secretarial support was a common concern for operational managers in this group, despite the fact that each division has a secretary. This approach will allow for better resource management and the ability to provide back up support.

*Note: Numbers in brackets, (#), are estimates of current FTEs.
• Moving the accounting staff from Maintenance to the existing support unit will allow for cross-training and back up from staff members.

• In addition, the move of Maintenance accounting staff will provide for a clearer separation between administrative (budget) and operational (management system) functions. This was an issue for the manager.

• The consolidation of accounting functions is, combined with the review and improvement of existing processes, bound to free up accounting staff at some point in the future.

b. Risks

• Some divisions in this group are very large. Managers may feel that there is a need for dedicated secretarial support. More detailed analysis may be required to more accurately determine needs and the best way to address them.

• Maintenance staff may express concern about the move of the accounting and secretarial staff to the Operations support services unit. It will be important to make sure that their service level and access do not suffer due to the change.

4. Administrative Services Group:

Consolidate accounting and secretarial staff for the Administrative Services group, Community Relations, Internal Audit, and the Comptroller’s Office into a single Administrative services support services unit.

Figure 4, on the following page, illustrates the proposed structure.

Under this approach, all accounting functions for the divisions and offices would be provided by a “new” support unit. Accounting and secretarial staff located in the divisions and offices in the building would move to a central location and support all staff within the group, rather than an individual division or office. This would not necessarily entail an increase in accounting and secretarial staff, rather, existing staff from other offices and support service units could be moved to this unit.
Figure 4

Utah Department of Transportation

Proposed Administrative Services Group Organization*

- Accounting Services
  - Accountant (?)
  - Accountant I (1)
  - Accounting Tech III (2)
  - Accounting Tech II (2)

- Secretarial Services
  - Support Services Specialist (?)
  - Executive Secretary (1)
  - Office Tech III (2)
  - Office Tech II (2)

- Administrative Services Group
  - Group Manager
  - Support Services Manager (?)**
  - Accountant (?)
  - Office Manager II (1)

*Note: Numbers in brackets, (#), are estimates of current FTEs.
**Note: The positions marked with (?) currently do not exist.
a. Benefits

- This approach would allow the Administrative Services group, Internal Audit, and Community Relations to establish a dedicated accounting and budgeting function. This would help address current concerns regarding the lack of expertise of some administrative support staff fulfilling these functions.

- It would also enable the Comptroller’s Office to clearly separate its own internal administrative functions from the oversight role the office has for the entire Department.

b. Risks

- Administrative Services staff is currently dispersed throughout the building. Staff and managers may find it difficult to accept a consolidation without a simultaneous attempt to move the divisions comprising the group closer together.

- Staff in the Comptroller’s Office may find it difficult to accept that the office’s administrative functions are to be carried out by a support services unit rather than the office staff.

- It may be difficult to determine whether some staff currently located in the Comptroller’s Office should remain there or move to the new support services unit.

- It may be difficult for secretarial staff to take over receptionist functions currently carried out by default by Community Relations staff.

5. Comptroller’s Office:

Focus the work of the staff in the Comptroller’s Office on oversight and support for accounting staff of the four support services units at the Rampton Complex and the regions.

The recommended separation of the administrative functions of the Comptroller’s Office from the function of the office itself would mean that the office would cease to carry out accounting or budgeting functions (process) for other work groups, divisions, or offices.
a. **Benefits**

- Comptroller’s Office staff will be able to carry out oversight and support functions that have suffered because staff was bogged down fulfilling accounting and budgeting functions for other divisions. This would, for example, include review of and assistance in making improvements to the existing accounting and budgeting processes as carried out in the Rampton Complex.

- The responsibilities of the Comptroller’s staff will be more clearly defined.

b. **Risks**

- The suggested change may be very difficult for staff to accept.

- The Comptroller’s Office can make this change only if the four support services units function properly.
Appendix A
Example of Evaluation Sheet for Managers
(Evaluation by Staff)
Appendix B
Detailed Findings and Recommendations by Function
A. Accounts Payable

1. Findings

- Accounting staff in the Project Development support services unit and in the Comptroller’s Office duplicate processing efforts when they verify and enter data for accounts payable. Significant extra steps are added to the verification and validation of an invoice.

- For some divisions, in particular those served by staff from the Comptroller’s Office, significant resources are dedicated to processing standard accounts payable. Methods are inflexible, small purchases are treated with the same level of effort as large ones.

- Dispersed administrative support staff inputting accounts payable information have significantly different levels of expertise. A more uniform approach and increased expertise would be possible with a consolidation of efforts.

- The FI-NET system is not used to the best benefit and efficiency of the operation for accounts payable. For example, some contract payments are made through ARCM instead of FI-NET, complicating the contract reconciliation effort. Some accounting staff in the Comptroller’s Office appear not to use the templates available to minimize data entry efforts.

2. Issues

- We believe that in some areas, accounting efforts could be significantly reduced by changes to processes and procedures. In particular, the use of FI-NET allows for controls that may make some review steps that exist now unnecessary.

- Our review indicates that staff may not be using the ARCM System to their best benefit. The system should be used for tracking project payments, but is currently also used for making payments. This causes duplicative effort and makes the reconciliation process difficult.
3. **Recommendation: Restructure the process to minimize the number of reviews, verifications, and audits of accounts payable.**

Our review indicates that there are opportunities to streamline the process while maintaining adequate internal control methods. In particular, UDOT should reevaluate current data entry procedures and review and audit procedures in the light of the oversight capabilities provided by FI-NET.

a. **Benefits**

   - Expedited methods of processing accounts payables of low dollar amount and streamlined, uniform methods of levels and verification approval will speed the processing and payment to vendors.

b. **Risks**

   - The new process still must ensure adequate measures of internal control.

4. **Recommendation: Ensure that accounts payable staff receives adequate FI-NET training.**

Our interviews indicate that staff carrying out accounting functions are often “too busy to go to training.” The Comptroller’s Office may want to strengthen the training requirements for accounts payable staff before they are given a security clearance to enter data into the system. Over time, it may be possible to limit the number of hand offs and reviews that are currently carried out because data entry staff is lacking sufficient understanding of the accounts payable process.

a. **Benefits**

   - Increased knowledge of the system will help all staff, including staff from the Comptroller’s Office, in reducing processing time and increasing efficiency of processing. This means reduced payment time, and increased productivity. Document processing capabilities will improve and coverage will increase.
b. **Risks**

- Not all staff currently carrying out accounts payable tasks have received adequate training. There may be resistance to introducing new requirements.

5. **Recommendation: Consider making all payments through FI-NET.**

Our interviews indicated that ARCM, rather than FI-NET, is used to make some consultant contract payments. The Department may want to consider making all payments through FI-NET. Data needed for tracking could be transferred from FI-NET to ARCM as needed.

a. **Benefits**

- The reconciliation process will be simplified.

b. **Risks**

- Staff are used to the current process. It may be difficult to effect a change.

6. **Recommendation: Consolidate accounting staff in areas where they are not yet consolidated.**

This would resolve problems arising from accounting staff that are dispersed throughout the building in smaller units. In particular in the Administrative Services divisions, staff find it difficult to provide continuous support because there is no back-up.

a. **Benefits**

- A more cohesive grouping of accounting staff will of make training easier and provide for better overall supervision, increased capability, and continuity of operation. This is true for both short-term and long-term operations.
b. **Risks**

- Staff and managers in the divisions may feel that the accounting functions are too far removed.

_B. Accounts Receivable_

1. **Findings**

- Some staff appear to be burdened with additional transaction and documentation steps that might not be needed. These additional steps have, in some cases, apparently been retained out of general operating practice. This was the case, for example, with receivables processed for other divisions by staff in the Comptroller’s Office.

- Our review of accounts receivable processes indicates that additional steps may be not so much for internal control (there already were several levels of verification), but for staff control purposes.

- The current approach makes it difficult to reconcile accounts receivable for damage claims.

2. **Issues**

- A great deal of accounts receivable processing effort appears to be performed out of habit, not because it is a necessary component of the process. Staff are not processing documents as efficiently as the system currently allows.

- Our limited analysis indicates that FI-NET can handle much of the accounts receivable functions. ARCM appears to be fairly cumbersome, requiring data entry on three different screens for each check received.

- Efforts of staff are thwarted by significant duplicative effort.

3. **Recommendation: Evaluate the accounts receivable function to determine the best process.**

   The process, as practiced by some sections now, is cumbersome, duplicative, and does not facilitate the provision of good information. A more uniform
and streamlined approach would provide better information. We suggest that UDOT review existing procedures for opportunities to eliminate unnecessary review steps. The evaluation should also include an analysis of the necessity for using ARCM, and the best way to coordinate accounts receivable data between FI-NET and ARCM.

a. Benefits

- Increased efficiency of operation and faster reporting of accounts receivable information.

- Reduced level of anxiety for staff. Those staff interviewed indicated a great deal of frustration with the current methods for processing documents.

- Reconciliation should not be a problem with a more uniform approach to reporting of accounts receivable into the FI-NET system.

b. Risks

- Restructuring the processing methods for accounts receivable may cause some resistance to change. Staff training should help ease the transition to a system that is more responsive.

C. Payroll

1. Findings

- There are no serious issues related to payroll. In general, the existing system functions well and is relatively error free.

2. Issues

- Errors in payroll data entry or coding are generally related to new staff carrying out the function or staff not understanding the job requirements clearly enough. This is particularly true in smaller divisions or offices (e.g. in the Administrative Services divisions) where payroll is the responsibility of secretarial staff.
• Some staff entering payroll data are not given the chance to review their work, this responsibility is carried out by the administrative manager. This has caused errors in the past.

• Staff fill their time sheets out either by hand or electronically. After approval by the employee’s immediate supervisor, the time sheets are entered by the payroll clerks into the system. This occurs even if the employee completes his or her time sheet electronically.

3. **Recommendation: Consolidate the payroll functions of all Administrative Services divisions, Community Relations, the Comptroller’s Office, and Internal Audit.**

This would mean separating the internal payroll function within the Comptroller’s Office from the oversight and support function for the entire department.

a. **Benefits**

   • Ability to maintain trained staff and back up for payroll function for the Administrative Services divisions, Internal Audit, and Community Relations.

b. **Risks**

   • The payroll clerk will be somewhat more removed from the managers and staff she/he supports.

   • Consolidation of all Administrative Services, Internal Audit, Community Relations, and Comptroller’s Office payroll functions would combine some divisions and offices that are not part of the same work group.

4. **Recommendation: The Department may want to look into opportunities to allow staff to submit their time sheets electronically.**

After the appropriate approval process, the Comptroller’s Office could transfer these data into the payroll system without rekeying them.
a. Benefit

- If payroll can be more automated, the payroll function (after supervisors approval) could be narrowed to audit which could be performed by the Comptroller’s Office. This would free up a significant amount of time for the payroll clerks. This approach may be particularly appropriate for the Rampton Complex because for most staff only exceptions to the routine need to be entered on the time sheets. Administrative support staff would still be needed for check distribution.

b. Risks

- Electronic time sheets filled out by staff may increase the error rate, at least initially. It will be important to ensure that there is sufficient supervisory control before the data are transferred into the system.

D. Budget Development and Monitoring

1. Findings

- There is wide variation in the management approach taken by those responsible for each budget; some managers are very involved, others delegate either to a professional staff person or to their administrative support staff.

- There is wide variation with regard to the ability of support staff to develop budgets and then monitor actual expenditures over time to warn managers of problems that may occur.

2. Issues

- Some divisions, offices, and work groups are not able to appropriately develop and monitor their budgets when relying on administrative support staff.

- Administrative support staff sometimes end up with budgetary responsibilities without having received formal training. This causes problems with both budget development and monitoring.
• The ability to adequately plan for the next year and monitor expenditures over time will become more important as the Department moves to a performance based approach that includes budgetary considerations.

3. **Recommendation:** Consolidate budget development and monitoring functions for the Administrative Services divisions and offices, Community Relations, and Internal Audit.

   a. **Benefits**
      
      • This approach would reduce the number of administrative support staff with budgetary responsibilities and would make it easier to ensure adequate skills and knowledge.

      • Consolidating this function would provide an opportunity for cross-training so that there is sufficient continuity when a staff person with budgetary responsibilities changes jobs.

      • Having a dedicated budgeting function providing services for each work group would make it easier to hold managers accountable for their budgets. Budget problems then could not be attributed to a lack of administrative support staff with budgetary expertise.

   b. **Risks**

      • Maintaining full control over budgeting is one of biggest concerns of division, office, and work group managers. There could be resistance to further consolidation because managers may feel that they are losing some control over it despite the fact that they are being provided with more reliable support.

   **E. Travel Arrangements/Reimbursements**

   1. **Findings**

      • The move to electronic forms for travel reimbursements has streamlined and shortened the process. (In Project Development, the
reimbursement time has been reduced from about four weeks to one week. Travel related tasks carried out by PDSS that in the past required two FTEs are now being carried out with about .85 FTE.) Errors also occur less often.

- Travel arrangements/reimbursements are carried out by both accounting and secretarial staff.

2. Issues

- The most significant travel issue appears to be one of authority. Administrative support staff sometimes find it difficult to ensure that all travel or conference arrangements and costs incurred are appropriate.

- In the Comptroller’s Office, there is a concern that the responsible administrative support staff person in the division or district office sometimes does not request receipts for trips for which the traveling staff person received an advance payment. This means that the Comptroller’s Office’s travel fund does not get reimbursed.

3. Recommendation: Make it the responsibility of the manager of the support services group to bring questionable issues to the attention of the Group Leader.

(Note: The PDSS manager has been given the authority of the Group Leader to audit travel expenses on his behalf. This helps facilitate correct charges.)

a. Benefits

- The involvement of the support services manager will ease the pressure on administrative support staff dealing with travel and help avoid incorrect charges.

- The accountability issue is addressed at the highest level of responsibility in the work group.
b. Risks

- The involvement of the support services manager may increase bureaucracy.

F. Secretarial/Receptionist

1. Findings

- Some traditional responsibilities of secretarial staff, such as typing, have diminished due to changes in technology. However, adjustments to responsibilities necessitated by this change have not been fully evaluated.

- The distribution of secretarial staff among divisions and offices is uneven, causing variations in the available level of service.

2. Issues

- There are different perceptions about the role and responsibilities of secretarial staff.

- There are a number of secretarial staff (Office Technicians and Secretaries) assigned to some divisions and offices. Other divisions and offices do not have administrative support that is directly responsible to them. This is causing some problems:
  - There is no back up for receptionist duties that are considered essential by operational managers. Secretarial staff sometimes must “make four calls before a trip to the bathroom to get phones covered.” This problem is bound to increase with full implementation of the trip reduction program.
  - Professional staff from divisions and offices without administrative support staff attempt to get administrative support from staff of other divisions and offices. They expect to be served although the administrative support staff person is not assigned to them. This puts secretarial staff in a difficult position and may impact their ability to carry out their responsibilities for their own division or office.
− Secretarial support is perceived as “spotty” because secretarial staff are not always available. This is the case, for example, on their day off when they participate in the trip reduction program.

- Administrative support staff of individual divisions and offices appear to redistribute at least part of their responsibilities among each other according to preference and skills. They also sometimes help each other during busy times.

3. **Recommendation: Evaluate the support functions that are needed from secretarial staff.**

We suggest that you survey professional staff to determine what types of support they require and survey secretarial staff to determine what types of support services they believe are needed. Topics should include:

- **Typist vs. word processor/desk top publishing specialist:** Most professional staff now do their own word processing and do not request or need as much typing support as in the past. Secretarial staff are concerned that this has led to a situation where correspondence and reports that look unprofessional leave the Department. Secretarial work should probably now focus more on document formatting and proof reading and less on key entry.

- **Evaluation of the need for a receptionist function:** Currently, continuous phone coverage is difficult for individual secretarial staff in the divisions and offices. While this issue would be resolved by the consolidation of secretarial staff in the work groups, the Department may want to review the necessity of a receptionist function for the divisions and work groups. With Audix, the Department has an efficient voice mailing system that would allow UDOT to free Office Technicians with receptionist duties for other tasks. The Department may also want to consider moving to a single central operator for the Rampton Complex instead. (This would also remove some of the pressure on Community Relations and may, combined with moving accounting and other administrative functions to a new administrative services support services group, eliminate the need for filling the currently vacant staff position.)
a. **Benefits**

- The duties of secretarial staff can be updated and clearly defined. This will help to reduce ambiguity and allow managers and staff to set clear performance goals and expectations.

- The review will also allow the Department to determine whether there are any other duties that are now obsolete or could be simplified.

b. **Risks**

- The review may generate unrealistic expectations from both secretarial staff and their “customers”.

4. **Recommendation:** Consider physically grouping secretarial staff in a location that is central to all divisions and offices that they support.

Pending clarification of the role and responsibilities of secretarial staff, UDOT may want to consider colocating all secretarial staff, with the exception of secretarial staff directly responsible to work group leaders, the Executive Director, or the Deputy Director. Secretarial staff consolidated into teams would provide support to all professional staff in their work group as requested. The secretarial staff should be made part of the support services group.

a. **Benefits**

- Administrative support staff can provide back up for each other, ensuring that the requested phone coverage is in place and other secretarial support is available during all work hours. This is particularly important when the trip reduction program is fully implemented.

- Consolidating the secretarial functions will allow secretarial staff to formalize currently informal agreements regarding the distribution of different tasks.
• Consolidation of secretarial functions will make training of new staff, cross-training of existing staff, and training to improve job skills easier in general.

• Consolidation of secretarial staff may also provide economies of scale and allow UDOT to free FTEs for other purposes.

• Consolidation of secretarial staff under an administrative manager will help to ensure that needed service is provided.

b. Risks

• For some professional staff, secretarial support will be somewhat more removed and services will be shared with other staff. This may cause resentment.

• Some administrative support staff may resist their relocation in the building and feel that their services should remain exclusive to one division or office.

• Consolidation of secretarial services at the work group level will require an administrative manager. The functionality of the group will depend on the skills of this manager.

G. Purchasing

1. Findings

• We have not found any significant problems with administrative support staff processing purchase requests of professional staff. Rather, concerns were related to the procurement process itself.

• Although an electronic form is available, not all administrative support staff appear to be using it.

• Purchase orders processed by staff of divisions who receive accounts payable assistance from the Comptroller’s Office are rekeyed by staff in the Comptroller’s Office, even if they are available in electronic form.
2. **Recommendation: Evaluate the potential for eliminating duplicate efforts in entering purchase order information electronically.**

Some staff are already using the electronic version of the form, but the information is later rekeyed for entry into FI-NET to ensure accuracy. Yet FI-NET provides for an audit or review step before the information actually enters the system. Elimination of the second data entry process could speed processing significantly and free staff time for other tasks.

a. **Benefits**

- Eliminating duplicate data entry could free accounting staff from data entry tasks. With adequate training, accounting staff could then focus on ensuring the integrity of the data under the guidance and oversight of the Comptroller’s Office. The current working supervisor classification may need to be assessed to account for the fact that their review function may not be needed any longer.

b. **Risks**

- Accounting staff currently entering data may not have the skills and expertise to take over the review function and may need training or be reassigned. In addition, their managers may feel that they need to check on their staff’s work independent of who entered the data. This change is likely to require a change in the attitude and management style of some administrative managers. It will also require a change in the role of the Comptroller’s Office.

**H. Personnel Activities**

1. **Findings**

- In general, personnel activities are carried out by mid-level administrative managers on behalf of the operational managers.

- Some mid-level administrative managers appear to spend a significant amount of time managing administrative support staff and lower level working supervisors.
2. Issues

- Micro-management by some administrative managers appears to cause busy work, limit the time managers spend on other priorities, and in some instances prevents administrative support staff from understanding the importance of their work and the implications of errors. (E.g. some payroll clerks never see the results of their data entry.)

3. Recommendation: Reduce the number of layers of management for administrative support staff.

This would, for example, mean that an expanded Project Development support services unit (including secretarial staff from the divisions) would have three managers directing different functions:

- One overall support services manager providing for coordination of support services, ensuring service delivery, budget, and policy interpretation support to operational managers.

- One manager for the accounting functions.

- One manager for the secretarial functions. (As staffing levels are adjusted in the support services units to address technology and other efficiency improvements, the second tier manager may become unnecessary.)

a. Benefits

- Reducing management intervention of staff work provides the opportunity for staff to develop responsibility, initiative, and an incentive to fully understand the job at hand.

b. Risks

- Staff will expand their sense of responsibility and initiative only if the Department’s culture actively supports and encourages these traits.

- Promotion to supervisor level is currently the only career path for administrative support staff. The Department will need to develop...
career paths that allow staff to progress without entering management positions.

I. Policies/Rules/Procedures/Documents

1. Findings
   
   • UDOT is currently simplifying policies, rules, and procedures in all areas, including administrative functions. It is envisioned that the end product of this effort will be an electronic document that can be accessed by all department staff as needed.

   • For most administrative support staff this is not a time consuming task. Staff found it difficult to estimate the amount of time spent in this area.

2. Issues

   • Administrative support staff in the divisions and offices charged with the task of informing managers about any relevant changes in policies, rules, procedures, and documents are sometimes relatively isolated. At times, it is difficult to remain current and to interpret the impact of new rules and policies for their managers. They may also have difficulty convincing managers that the new rules need to be followed.

3. Recommendation: Include communication of rules, policies, and regulations affecting the work groups, divisions, and offices in the duties of the support services manager.

   a. Benefits

   • This change will minimize the number of administrative support staff who are required to track changes and make it easier to communicate about potential interpretations.

   • The level of authority attached to the support services manager position will help in ensuring that changes are implemented.
b. Risks

- The support services managers must be able to determine the implications of new policies, procedures, and rules accurately.